



116.

A

Funeral SERMON

PREACHED AT

C H E R T S E Y,

UPON THE

D E A T H

Of the REVEREND

Mr. *JACOB KUFFELER,*

Who Died *September 1. 1723.*



By DANIEL MAYO, M. A.

L O N D O N:

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Monks of Mount



1 PETER I. 24, 25.

For all Flesh is as Grass, and all the Glory of Man as the Flower of Grass; the Grass withereth, and the Flower thereof falleth away, but the Word of the Lord endureth for ever: And this is the Word, which by the Gospel is preached unto you.



FTER the Salutation at the Beginning of this Epistle, the Apostle offers up Thanksgiving to God, for the Benefits bestowed on those to whom he wrote, especially for their Regeneration, thro' the Mercy of God, and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ; and then proceeds to give divers Exhortations to very important Duties; such as Diligence and Sobriety in Hope; Watchfulness against committing former Sins, and Conformity to God in universal Holiness, with unfeigned Love of the Brethren. These Duties are urged upon the Consciences of Christians in this Chapter, with several weighty Arguments, *viz.* The Consideration of God's Nature and Command; the Certainty of the Judgment

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ment to come; the End and Design of our Redemption by the Blood of Christ; and our Regeneration by the Word of God.

The Apostle had mentioned, v. 3, 4. their having been *Begotten again to a lively Hope, to an Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away*; and in the Words preceding my Text, their *being born again*, as an Argument to persuade them to universal Holiness; and giveth an Account of the Cause, or at least of the Means, by which they were thus born again; that it was not of *corruptible Seed*, (i. e. in the Words of the Evangelist ^a, not of *Blood*, nor of the *Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man*) but of *incorruptible (Seed) by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever*: Then come in the Words of my Text, connected with those that went before, by the causal Particle *For* ^b, expressing the Frailty and Vanity of Man in all his Glory, whose Power and Excellency therefore cannot be the Cause of so great a Work as the Regeneration, or Renovation of the Soul, nor produce such noble and permanent Effects, as are found in them that are born again: There is need of an incorruptible Principle, to produce such incorruptible Effects; and such a Principle is the Word of the Lord that abideth for ever.
“ They were regenerate to a new Life, not by any
“ human Mortal, but supernatural, immortal Means,
“ even by the Word of Christ, who liveth for ever ^c.

And this Account of the Coherence of my Text with the foregoing Words, will appear the more just and proper, if we consider, they seem to be taken from the Prophecy of *Isaiah*, Chap. xl. v. 6, 7. where we find almost the very same Words as in my Text. The Prophet in that Place, by God’s Com-

^a Job. i. 13.

^b Διότι.

^c Dr. Hammond in Loc.

mand, is comforting his People with the Promise of their Deliverance, from the Power and Oppression of the *Babylonians*; and at the same Time foretels the Deliverance of all Men, from a much worse Condition than the *Babylonian Captivity*, by the *Messiah*, and the Grace and Power of his Gospel. For this Purpose, the Prophet is commanded to *cry*, or proclaim Abroad, *All Flesh is Grass*, &c. i. e. all the Power of Oppressors, when God cometh out against them, shall soon wither, or be as easily trodden down as the Grass; tho' human Opposition to such oppressing Power will not succeed, because that of it self is like Grass, or like a fading Flower, and therefore not to be trusted in, or depended on. So in like manner, when the *Messiah* shall be revealed, and his Power and Grace shall be manifested, all Opposition from Satan, and the Lusts of Men shall be trodden down, or wither away as the Grass, or fade like Flowers; and the Word of his Gospel shall do that which no human Wisdom or Power alone is able to do, in order to the Renovation of Men's Minds, and the Reformation of their Lives.

I shall stay no longer in considering the Connection of my Text, with the preceding Words, but insist upon them as evidently representing to us the Vanity of Man, as being frail and mortal, together with the proper Consolation, under the Apprehension of this our Vanity, *viz.* The Perpetuity or everlasting Duration of the Word of God.

First, I begin with the Consideration of the Vanity of Man, as frail and mortal; which is thus expressed, *All Flesh is as Grass, and the Glory of Man as the Flower of Grass, the Grass withereth, and the Flower thereof falleth away.*

1. In order to explain and illustrate this Matter, we may observe the Apostle doth evidently make a Comparison between Mankind and the Grass of the Field,

Field, and between the Glory of Man and the Flowers of (or among) the Gras; and we need look for no other Resemblance, as the Foundation of this Comparison, than what is here mentioned, *viz.* That as the one, so the other is a withering, fading, and dying thing: And we may justly speak of Man as being *vain*, seeing he is thus *frail*; for this is to speak after the Language of the holy Psalmist^a, *Lord, make me to know my End, and the Measure of my Days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am. Behold thou hast made my Days as an Hand's Breadth, and mine Age is as nothing before thee. Verily, every Man in his best State* (or in the Words of my Text, *All Flesh, and the Glory of Man*) *is altogether Vanity.* *Selab.* We find the Comparison in my Text, in other Places of Scripture; as when the Psalmist saith, *We are like Grass, in the Morning it flourisheth and groweth up, in the Evening it is cut down and withereth*^b. And as for Man, his Days are as Grass, as a Flower of the Field so he flourisheth. For the Wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the Place thereof shall know it no more^c. Again, *He* (i. e. Man) *cometh up like a Flower, and is cut down*^d.

By *all Flesh*, in my Text, we are to understand, *all Men*; and Man is here properly spoken of with respect to his *Flesh*, or Body, because that only is mortal, or that only withereth away; and when that is no more fit for the immortal Soul to inhabit, because not fit for it to operate by, *then must the Spirit return to God that gave it*, to receive according to what was done in the Body, whether Good or Evil. For as it is appointed unto Man once to die, so after Death there will be the Judgment^e. We are further

^a *Psal. xxxix. 4, 5.* ^b *Psal. xc. 5, 6.* ^c *Psal. ciii. 15, 16.*

^d *Job xiv. 2.* ^e *Heb. ix. 27.*

to take Notice of the Universality of the Expression, *All Flesh, or all Mankind, without Distinction or Difference;* or let the Difference between Man and Man, here in this World, be never so many or great, in this they all agree, they are frail and fading, they must die and wither as the Grass.

By the *Glory of Man*, we may either understand the better and more noble and excellent sort of Men, who may excel others, as much as the most fragrant and beautiful Flowers, or useful Herbs, excel common Grass, and noxious Weeds; as St. James saith of *the rich*, *They shall pass away as the Flower of the Grass*^a. And we find by Experience, that Magistrates and Ministers, and Men of all Orders and Conditions die. Rich and Poor, High and Low, Good and Bad, must *all lie down alike in the Dust, and the Worms shall cover them*^b. Or else, by this Expression, we may understand the Ornaments or Advantages that some Men have above others in this World, which is the Cause of the aforementioned Differences and Distinctions; such as Beauty, Strength, and Vigour of Body; Wit, and Learning, with other natural or acquired Endowments of the Mind; and Wealth, and Honour, and Power, in their several Stations, or Conditions here in this World. And these things may very properly be called the *Glory of Man*, because Men are very prone to please and pride themselves with them: Tho' as Men themselves must die and wither as the Grass, so in that Day, if not before, these Flowers will fall away. And, I think, that from the Nature of the Similitude, and perhaps from the Signification of the different Words ^c in my Text, we may be directed to take Notice of what is frequently verified

^a James i. 10.

^b Job xxi. 26.

^c signifying *ornaments*.

by

by Experience, That as Man himself must die, so that which is called the *Glory of Men*, may fall away even before the Man himself dieth.

(1.) As to Man himself, he must die. This is appointed, and is the Decree of Heaven, that shall not be reversed, as it cannot be controuled. *Job speaketh thus, I know that thou wilt bring me to Death, and to the House appointed for all living*^a. And *Solomon* tells us, *The living know that they shall die*^b. It is commonly and truly said, There is nothing more sure than Death. Holy *David* saith, *No Man can by any Means redeem his Brother, (or save his Friend from dying) he cannot give unto God a Ransom for him, that he should live for ever, and not see Corruption*^c. And memorable are the Words of *Solomon*, *There is no Man that hath Power over the Spirit, (i. e. his own Spirit, or the Spirit of another Man) to retain the Spirit; neither hath he Power in the Day of Death; and there is no Discharge in that War*^d. We must all of us one Day enter the Lists with the King of Terrors, none shall be excused because too old or too young, or too great, or too mean; there can be no substituting another in our room, we must our selves engage in this War; nor can we adjourn the Day of Death; and when we fight, we are sure to fall. The Similitude in my Text is very proper to signify this our Frailty, for the Grass cannot stand against the Mower's Sithe, but may be cut down almost as soon as it springs up, or before it is full grown: In like manner we may be cut off in the Morning of Life, or the midst of our Days, by some sudden Accident, or a violent Distemper, that shall baffle the Skill and Care of the ablest Physician, as the Kindness and Prayers of our best and

^a *Job* xxx. 23. ^b *Eccl.* ix. 5. ^c *Psal.* xlix. 7, 9. ^d *Eccl.* viii. 8. dearest

dearest Friends and Relations shall not avail to keep off the fatal Stroke: However, this is certain, that as Grass, if it be not cut down, will wither and die away, by the scorching Heat of the Sun, or some blasting Wind that may go over it; so the incurable Distemper of old Age, will make our Flesh to wither and decay, and our Bodies to moulder into Dust. As the strongest Buildings, if they are not burned or blown down, will decay by length of Time, and fall to the Ground of themselves; so the earthly House of this our Tabernacle will dissolve, and turn to Rotteness and Dust.

(2.) As to the Glory of Man, that may fall away, before the Man himself dies. And it is no uncommon thing to find a Man stript of all his Ornaments and external Advantages, and to be as the Stalk of a Flower, when the beautiful and odiferous Leaves are fallen away. How many Accidents may deprive Men of their Wealth? Riches may make themselves Wings and fly away, as a Bird towards Heaven; a lying Tongue may give an incurable Wound to our Reputation; some bodily Distemper may spoil the most beautiful Countenance, and enfeeble the strongest Constitution; and (which is yet more melancholy to think upon) may so affect the Brain, as to destroy our Memory, and hinder the use of Reason. And if these Events follow not upon some Distempers of Body, yet old Age will be attended with these Evils. *Then shall the Sun, and Moon, and Stars be darkened; the Keeper of the House shall tremble, and the strong Men bow themselves; Those that look out at the Windows, shall be darkened, &c.* as you may read Eccl. xii. O would to God, therefore, that Men were so wise, as to remember their Creator in the Days of their Youth, while these evil Days

come not, nor the Years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no Pleasure in them.

2. Before we proceed to the Consideration of the other Part of my Text, it is fitting that we make some due Improvement of this Meditation, that Man is frail and mortal, withering away as the Grass, fading and falling away even like Flowers of the Grass. And,

1. We may hence learn, the great Evil of Sin, as being the procuring Cause of all the afflictive Evils we meet with in this World, and which hath introduced Death, and every thing that is comprehended under that formidable Word. St. Paul giveth us the best Account of the Origine of all Evil, in these Words, *By one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin, and so Death passed upon all Men, for that all have sinned*². We should hate and avoid Sin, because it is the Transgression of God's Law, and therefore, in its own Nature, contrary to God, who is the greatest Good; and if this doth not sufficiently dissuade us from a Love to Sin, and the Practice of it, methinks we should look upon it as the most hateful, because the most hurtful thing in all the World. Avoid this Evil therefore, which is the Cause of all temporal Calamities, yea Death it self; and not only so, but deserveth eternal Pains and Penalties in another World, which are called the *second Death*.

2. We may learn the Awfulness of divine Justice and Truth; of which there is such a standing Monument, in all Ages and Places of the World, as that of the Death of Men, in Succession one after another. We know the dreadful Com-

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mination, Gen. ii. 17. given to our first Parents, *In the Day thou eatest thereof, (i. e. of the forbidden Fruit) thou shalt surely die.* And from that very Moment, wherein the divine Precept was violated, Man became mortal, because obnoxious to divine Justice; which did verify the Truth of the Threatning, in the actual Death of the first Offenders, and of Millions of their Offspring afterwards. Let us therefore say, *Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments,* whenever we behold a dead Corps, or think upon our selves, and others, as dying Creatures.

3. Let us admire and adore the divine Goodness and Patience towards us, and others, who are yet alive. And should we not say in the Words of the Prophet, *It is of the Lord's Mercy, that we are not consumed, because his Compassions fail not* ^a. What a Wonder is it, that God suffers such as we are to live? that he endureth with so much long-suffering, such provoking Sinners as we have been? Why are not we cut down as cumber-ground Trees? Whence is it that we have not been cut down in the midst of our Days, and the midst of our Sins, and cast into Burnings long ago? It is yet more wonderful that God sustaineth our Souls in Life. However so it is; that he hath granted us Life and Favour, and his *Visitation doth preserve our Spirits* ^b. And it is because we have obtained help of God that we continue to this Day ^c. Now what remains? but that we are careful not to despise the Riches of his Goodness, and Forbearance, and long-suffering, knowing that the Goodness of God leadeth Men to Repentance ^d.

^a Lament. iii. 22. ^b Job x. 12. ^c Acts xxvi. 22. ^d Rom. ii. 4.

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4. We should learn to be humble. The best of Men have no Reason to be proud of anything, and yet yain Man is apt to be proud, almost of every thing. If we find our selves inclined to pride our selves in those Ornaments, or Endowments, or Advantages, we have above some other Men, it may be of use to humble us, to consider the Apostle's arguing, *Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?* ^a All that we have, is bestowed on us by divine Bounty, as a free Gift; or rather, entrusted with us, as a Talent that should be improved, and must be accounted for. But if these Thoughts will not keep us humble, let us farther consider, how soon the Glory of Man will fade like a Flower; let us but converse a little with the Dead in our serious Meditations; or rather think how soon we our selves may be free among the Dead; that our selves, and all our Honour, must be laid in the Dust; and this may serve to hide Pride from Man.

5. Let us consider how much we are indebted to the Grace of the Lord Jesus; who by his Death hath destroyed him that hath the Power of Death, that is, the Devil; and hath delivered them, who through fear of Death, were all their Life-time subject unto Bondage ^b: And by his Gospel hath brought Life and Immortality to Light ^c. It were a melancholy Thought indeed, that we must encounter this last Enemy, and fall by his Power, had we not Assurance that this last Enemy shall be destroyed: It is very uncomfortable to look only into the dark

^a 1 Cor. iv. 7.

^b Heb. ii. 14, 15.

^c 2 Tim. i. 10.

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and silent Grave, where our Friends are laid, and we our selves must lie, could we not by Faith look through, and beyond the Grave, unto that bright and blessed State, whither our risen, and ascended Lord is gone before, to prepare Mansions for all his Followers; and who has promised he will raise up them that believe in him, and give them eternal Life. But now through the abundant Grace of the Lord Jesus, we have Redemption through his Blood, even the Remission of Sin; so that the Sting of Death being taken away, we may in the darkest Hour triumph and rejoice in the Words of St. Paul; *O Death, where is thy Sting! O Grave, where is thy Victory! The Sting of Death is Sin, and the Strength of Sin is the Law. But Thanks be to God, which giveth us the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*^a.

The Second thing in my Text, which we are now to consider, is, the Perpetuity, or everlasting Duration of the Word of God: This is a proper Consolation under the melancholy Apprehension of our own, and others Vanity, as frail and mortal.

If we consider our selves, and all things round about us, in this World, we shall perceive them to be withering as the Grafs, and fading like Flowers; and according to another Scripture-Similitude, *fleeting like a Shadow*^b: How natural then is the Enquiry, Is there nothing that is solid and durable? Is there nothing stable and permanent? Nothing that liveth and abideth for ever? To which we might answer, There is a *living* God, who will be the everlasting Portion of holy and *immortal* Spirits; for the Spirit shall not wither and decay with

^a Cor. xv. 55, 56, 57. ^b Job xiv. 2.

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the Body, but when the Dust shall return to the Earth as it was, the Spirit shall return unto God who gave it^a. As there are things that are seen, and are but temporal; so there are things which are not seen, and that are eternal^b. My Text informeth us, *The Word of the Lord endureth for ever.*

We are at no Loss to know what is intended by the *Word of the Lord*, because, in the following Expression, the Apostle tells us, he meaneth *the Word, which by the Gospel was preached unto Christians*. The Gospel therefore of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, this Word of our Salvation, is the Word of the Lord which endureth for ever: And considering the Reference of my Text, to that forecited Passage of the Prophet, *Isa. xl. 6, 7.* we may observe that the Gospel of Jesus Christ was preached by the ancient Prophets under the old Testament, tho' not so fully and clearly as it was preached by Christ and his Apostles under the New Testament. And St. Peter saith a little before my Text, that the Prophets enquired and searched diligently into, and prophesied of that Salvation and Grace which should come unto us, and that the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, testified before-hand the Sufferings of Christ, and the Glory that should follow^c. And the Apostle of the Gentiles tells the *Ephesians*, That we are built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, *Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner Stone*^d. And as Jesus Christ himself, so his Gospel, is the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever^e.

My Text speaketh of this Word of the Lord, as preached by the Gospel, i. e. by the Mouths of Christ and his Apostles; for at the first it began to

^a *Eccl. xii. 7.* ^b *Cor. iv. 18.* ^c *Pet. i. 10, 11.* ^d *Eph. ii. 20.* ^e *Heb. xiii. 8.*

be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him^a, who were commanded to go into all the World, and to preach the Gospel to every Creature^b. But we are to consider this Word of the Lord, as made known to us by writing; and thus it is the very same for Substance, with that which was preached under the Conduct and Influence of the infallible Spirit. For what this Apostle Peter saith elsewhere, concerning the Prophecies of the Old Testament, is as true of the Words spoken and written by the Writers of the New Testament; that *these holy Men of God spake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*^c. So that in the Words of another Apostle, *All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God*^d. I shall now explain to you this Property of the divine Word; and then shew you, what Improvement we should make of it.

1. I am to explain this Property of the divine Word, that endureth for ever. We find the same thing asserted in other Places of Scripture; e. g. The Royal Psalmist, among other excellent Properties of God's Word, mentions this, *Psal. xix. 9. The Fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever. And thus he singeth, Psal. cxix. 89, 90. For ever, O Lord, thy Word is settled in Heaven, thy Faithfulness is unto all Generations.* Read also the Words of our blessed Saviour, *Mat. v. 18. Verily, I say unto you, till Heaven and Earth pass, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled.* And again, *Mat. xxiv. 35. Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but my Words shall not pass away.* The Perpetuity or everlasting Duration of the Word of God, may be considered with Regard to the Word it self, or its Effects.

^a *Heb. ii. 4.* ^b *Mark xvi. 15.* ^c *2 Pet. i. 21.* ^d *2 Tim. iii. 16.*
(1.) If

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(1.) If we consider the Word it self, so it endur-
reth for ever. The Covenant of God contained
therein, is as stable and permanent, and shall last
as long as the *Ordinances of the Moon, and of the*
Stars^a; it is as firm and durable as that Covenant
which God made with *Noah*, Gen. viii. 22. *While*
the Earth remaineth, Seed-time and Harvest, and
Cold and Heat, and Summer and Winter, and Day
and Night shall not cease.

Under this Head, we may consider, the wonder-
ful Preservation of the sacred Writings, that con-
tain the Revelation of God's Mind and Will. The
Books of *Moses* (who wrote of *Christ*^b) are the
most ancient of any Writings now extant, and
were, it may be, the first that ever were written;
and tho' it is true, that strict Care was used by the
Jews to preserve them, yet it was owing intirely
to divine Providence, that they were not lost when
the Jews were carried Captive to *Babylon*; and af-
terwards dispersed over all the Earth, upon the
Destruction of their City, and Temple, and Na-
tion, by the *Romans*. And as to the Writings of
the New Testament, how wonderfully have they,
together with those of *Moses*, and the Prophets,
been transmitted down from Age to Age, intire
and uncorrupted; notwithstanding all the Rage
and Malice of the Devil and his Instruments? And
when the Teeth of Time have devoured other
Writings, that once were greatly esteemed, so that
many of them are wholly lost, and but Scraps or
Fragments of others do remain, yet we have the
sacred Canon still remaining entire; and, thus, the
Word of the Lord doth, and shall endure for ever.

But that which further demands our Observati-
on is, that the subject Matter contained in these
sacred Writings, and which is the Word of God,
is not only of most firm and stable Verity, but of
perpetual Duration and Use, &c. g.

i. The Doctrines, or Truths revealed unto us
thereby, shall remain sure and certain for ever;
when many common Maxims, and vulgar Errors,
that may have been long in Vogue, shall vanish and
die away without Regard. It will always remain
true, that is revealed in these Volumes, concerning
the divine Nature and Perfections, and God's Re-
lation to Men; that he is a Spirit, infinite, eternal,
unchangeable in his Being, Wisdom, Power, Ho-
liness, Justice, Goodness, and Truth. That there
are three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father,
the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and that these Three
are One^a. That God hath made the World, and all
things therein, and is Lord of Heaven and Earth,
and giveth unto all Life, and Breath, and all things^b.
That God so loved the World, that he gave his only
begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should
not perish, but have everlasting Life^c. That Jesus
Christ is come in the Flesh^d, and was God manifest in
the Flesh^e. That he was delivered for our Offences,
and was raised again for our Justification^f. That he
was received up into Heaven, and sat on the right
Hand of God^g. That there shall be a Resurrection
of the Dead, both of the Just and the Unjust^h. That
God hath appointed a Day in which he will judge the
World in Righteousness, by that Man whom he hath
ordainedⁱ; even the Man Christ Jesus. That the

^a *1 John v. 7.* ^b *Acts vii. 24, 25.* ^c *John iii. 16.* ^d *1 John iv. 2.* ^e *1 Tim. iii. 16.* ^f *Rom. iv. 25.* ^g *Mark xvi. 19.* ^h *Acts xxiv. 15.* ⁱ *Acts xvii. 31.*

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Wicked shall go away into everlasting Punishment, but the Righteous into Life eternal^a.

2. The Rules and Precepts of this Word are of perpetual Obligation: When human Laws do fail, because the Reason of them faileth, or may be abrogated, or altered, the divine Law contained in the Word of God, shall never be altered nor abrogated; never be repealed, or grow obsolete. It will ever remain our Duty, *to love God with all the Heart, and with all the Soul, and with all the Mind; and to love our Neighbours as our selves^b.* That we should do justly, and love Mercy, and walk bumbly with our God^c. That whatsoever we would that Men should do to us, even so we should do to them^d. That, especially where the Gospel is preached, God commands all Men every where to repent^e. That as Repentance towards God, so Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ^f, is the indispensable Duty of a Sinner, in order to his Salvation. That we ought, in conformity to the Design of the Gospel, *to deny Ungodliness, and worldly Lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present World^g;* and adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

3. The Promises and Threatnings of the Word of God will remain unalterable. As to the Promises, they are all *Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus*, they shall endure for ever; so that it will be true in all Ages of the World, that *whoso confesseth and forsaketh his Sins shall have Mercy^h.* And if we confess our Sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanse us from all Unrighteousnessⁱ. That he that believeth in Jesus Christ is not condemned, but hath

^a Mat. xxv. 46. ^b Mat. xxii. 37, 39. ^c Micah 6. 8. ^d Mat. vii. 12. ^e Acts xvii. 30. ^f Acts xx. 21. ^g Titus ii. 12. ^h Prov. xxviii. 13. ⁱ John i. 9.

everlasting

everlasting Life^a. That if by patient Continuance in well doing, we seek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, God will render to us eternal Life^b. Then, as to the Threatnings in the Word of God, they also are invariable; e. g. That the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God; Neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abusers of themselves with Mankind, nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners^c: That except we repent we must perish^d: That he that believeth not shall be damned^e: That without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord^f: That if any Man draw back, God's Soul shall have no Pleasure in him^g.

(2.) If we consider the Word of the Lord, with regard to its Effects, so likewise it endureth for ever; i. e. the Word will in all Ages produce noble Effects, and some of these Effects will abide for ever, in the most strict and proper Sense of the Words for ever. It may be, the Apostle in my Text, had a principal Regard to this, because he is speaking of the Word of the Lord as the Instrument or Means of our Regeneration, or new Birth, when 'tis preached to us. But then we should remember; that the Word may have this noble Effect, it must not only be duly preached, but it must be heard after a right manner also. In the Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul is speaking of the mighty Change that was wrought in them, *That they were dead to Sin, and alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord*: That whereas they were the Servants of Sin, they were now made free from Sin, and became the Servants of Righteous-

^a John iii. 18, 36. ^b Rom. ii. 7. ^c 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11. ^d Luke xiii. 3. ^e Mark xvi. 16. ^f Heb. xii. 14. ^g Heb. x. 38.

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ness; and the Cause of this happy Change was this, *they had obeyed from the Heart that Form of Doctrine which was delivered unto them*^a: Or as we read in the Margin, *whereto, or whereinto ye were delivered, i. e. formed and fashioned after the Temper, Nature, and Design of the Gospel Doctrine*: as when a thing is cast into a Mould, it receiveth the Form thereof: To the same purpose we read 2 Cor. iii. of the Gospel, as the glorious Ministration of the Spirit, to be permanent, or abiding; by means of which, *we do with open Face behold, as in a Glass, the Glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same Image from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord*^b.

The Scriptures of Truth do often mention the noble Effects of the Word of God, upon the Hearts and Consciences of Men. David, in that forementioned Psalm, wherein he speaketh of several excellent Properties of the Word of God, doth also speak of its mighty Effects; That it doth convert the Soul; and make wise the Simple; and rejoice the Heart; and enlighten the Eyes^c. In the New Testament, we read, that the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged Sword; piercing even to the dividing asunder of Soul and Spirit, and of the Joints and Marrow; and is a Discerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart^d. It will cast down Imaginations, and every thing that exalteth it self against the Knowledge of God, and bring into Captivity (or Subjection) every Thought to the Obedience of Christ^e. God of his own Will hath begotten us with this Word of Truth, that we should be a kind of first Fruits of his Creatures^f: As it

^a Rom. vi. 17. ^b ver. 18. ^c Psal. xix. 7, 8. ^d Heb. iv. 12.
^e 2 Cor. x. 5. ^f James i. 18.

is said in the Words preceding my Text, by it we are born again. And as this Apostle Peter saith elsewhere, *We are made Partakers of a divine Nature*².

These are the noble Effects of the Word of God, and as those happy Dispositions of Soul that are called Christian Graces or Virtues, (*Graces*, because the Gifts and Operations of God in us; *Virtues*, because of their Influence and Power, in the regulating our Lives) are most excellent in their own Nature, and in the truest Sense, the *Glory of Man*; so they are permanent and enduring for ever; they shall not wither as the Grass, nor fade like a Flower. When the Body dieth, and all outward Ornaments and Advantages do fail, these will abide in the Soul, and shall be perfected in another State. They will be Part of our Felicity in another World, as it will be a great Part of Hell-Torments, that Men's Vices, or wicked Passions shall remain and rage without Controul, and without suitable Gratifications; so that every Man may be said to carry about with him here, and carry with him out of this World, a Heaven, or a Hell, in his own Soul. And besides this, the glorious Consequences of these happy Effects, through the rich Mercy, and free Promise of God, will be everlasting, or endure for ever; which are contained under these charming Words *eternal Life*, in the most ample Sense and Meaning thereof; denoting to us Glory, and Honour, and Peace, and every thing that is needful and desireable to make us happy and blessed, and that for ever and ever.

2. For the right Improvement of this Truth,

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thus explained, we might enlarge on such things as these.—*That we ought highly to esteem this Word of the Lord; and indeed we cannot put too great a Value upon it.* Let us say with *David*, *It is more to be desired than Gold, yea, than much fine Gold; and is sweeter than Honey, and the Honey Comb*^a. And with *Job*, *I have esteemed the Words of his Mouth, more than my necessary Food*^b. —*That we should evidence our Esteem of this Word by searching the Scriptures*^c. *That like those that dig in the Mines for hid Treasures*^d, we should study the Scriptures, to get Understanding; *the Merchandise whereof is better than the Merchandise of Silver, and the Gain whereof than fine Gold*^e. *For Wisdom is the principal Thing.* —*That we should believe and stedfastly adhere to the doctrinal Truths contained in this divine Revelation: We should henceforth be no more Children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every Wind of Doctrine, by the flight of Men, and cunning Craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive*^f. But should be stedfast and unmoveable, and earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints^g. —*That we ought constantly to regard this Word, as our Rule of Life, endeavouring always to conform our Heart and Life thereto: Taking heed to this sure Word, as unto a Light that shineth in a dark Place*^h. As knowing 'tis a Lamp under our Feet, and a Light unto our Pathⁱ. —*That we be duly affected with the awful Threatnings, and es-*

^a *Psal. xix. 10.*

^b *Job xxiii. 12.*

^c *John v. 39.*

^d *Prov. iii. 13, 14.*

^e *Chap. iv. 7.*

^f *Eph. iv. 14.*

^g *Jude ver. iii.*

^h *2 Pet. i. 19.*

ⁱ *Psal. cxix. 105.*

pecially do confide in the precious Promises of the Gospel. Knowing this is a sure Word, and a *tried Word*^a, we may safely trust thereto in all Difficulties of Life; and may derive comfort from thence, even when we are dying, and find this World, as it were, sinking under us, and all human Help to fail; and know, by Experience, the full Import of the Words in my Text, *All Flesh is as Grass, and the Glory of Man as the Flower of the Grass.*

I will insist a little more upon two things, the first of which is proper for our Consideration at all times; and the other, a suitable Meditation on the present sad and solemn Occasion.

1. Let us be very solicitous to find those happy Effects of this Word of God in our Souls, that will endure for ever. May this Word of Salvation prove effectual to the Salvation of our Souls! We should remember, it is the Rule of Duty now, and will be the Rule of our Judgment hereafter; *for God will judge the Secrets of Men, by Jesus Christ, according to the Gospel*^b. The Word and Will of God is contained in our Bibles; it is often explained and urged upon our Consciences, by the Ministers of Christ; but let us enquire how it is entertained? Is it received in Faith and Love, or is it slighted and rejected? People are not to be discommended for their Care about the Manner in which the Word is preached or delivered to them, but I heartily wish they were more careful about the Manner in which they hear it, or receive it. If this Word be not a *Savour of Life unto Life*, it

^a *Psal. xviii. 30.*

^b *Rom. ii. 16.*

will be a *Savour of Death unto Death*^a. If this Word prove not effectual to our Salvation, it will be an Aggravation of our Condemnation; and we shall wish we had been born in the darkest Corners of the Earth, rather than in such a Land of Light, as our happy Island; because it will be more tolerable, in the Day of Judgment, for the Inhabitants of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, than for such as perish from under the Gospel. Let us then enquire; were our blinded Eyes ever opened, and our perverse Wills renewed, and our Souls converted, *from Darkness to Light, and the Power of Satan unto God*^b? Are we begotten again, and sanctified by this Word of Truth? In a Word, what are we the wiser and the better for our Bibles, that we have had so long in our Hands? And for the many Sermons we have heard from the Ministers of Christ, the Preachers of this Word, some of which are dead, but others, through the Favour of God, are yet alive; tho' they are dying also, *For all Flesh is as Grass*.

2. Let the Consideration of the Perpetuity of God's Word, afford us Comfort under the Loss of the faithful Ministers of the Gospel: Their Death is a Loss to those that survive, though unto them it is Gain; for *blessed are the dead, that die in the Lord; even so, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their Labours, and their Works shall follow them*^c.

This is a suitable Meditation for you in this Place, who are deprived of an able Minister of the New Testament, who had been your faithful Pastor for thirty Years; but is now in this World

^a 2 Cor. ii. 16.

^b Acts xxvi. 18.

^c Revel. xiv. 13.

no more. He will therefore no more gall the Consciences of careless and secure Sinners, (if any such are among you) by his Admonitions and severe Reproofs, and thundering out the Terrors of the Lord against those that *bless themselves in their Heart, saying, we shall have Peace, though we walk in the Imaginations of our Heart, and add Drunkenness to Thirst*²: This He would do sometimes after such a manner, as, one would think, if Sinners were not quite stupid, and hardened to such a Degree, as to be past feeling, they would have been ready to cry out, as the Devils did to our Saviour, *Art thou come to torment us before the Time?* Nor will he any more be employed in his more delightful Work, as a Son of Consolation, speaking a Word in Season to weary Souls; coming with the Balm of Gilead to heal the wounded Conscience.

I need not enlarge unto you upon the manner of his preaching, who, for so many Years, have been well acquainted with it, and know so well, that, as the subject Matter of his Discourses was the weightier Matters of the Law, and the most substantial Doctrines, Duties, and Privileges of the Gospel; so he treated of those in the most plain, and familiar, and practical Manner, without affecting a vain shew of Learning, or using quaint Expressions, or needless Criticisms: Yet his Sermons were solid, and serious, and judicious, and above the Contempt of the most nice and curious. There was a remarkable Liveliness and Vigour, in his preaching, that was with Constancy,

² Deut. xxix. 19.

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and for a proper length of Time, though he laboured for several Years under such great Weakness of Body, that some would think might have justified them in desisting from their Work; or have made them so to curtail their Discourses, as if they apprehended the Brevity of them was their greatest Commendation.

Nor is it needful to enlarge before you, upon the Holiness and Usefulness of his exemplary Life and Conversation. *For you are Witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably, he behaved among them that believe;* and with how much Wisdom he acted towards all Men; so that he obtained a good Report from all sorts of Men, and his Memory will be precious. I do not mean, by what I have said, to insinuate that he was wholly free from Imperfections, and Faults. No, these are to be found in the best of Men, whilst here on Earth, and are more conspicuous, or at least more observed in the Ministers of the Gospel, than in other Men. But, I think, I may be confident, that no Man was so sensible of, or could more severely animadvert upon these, than this good Man himself did. Insomuch, that when others had (as they ought) a very good Esteem of his Abilities for, and Performances in his ministerial Office, and, upon just Grounds, the most comfortable Hopes of his real Goodness, and safe Condition, as to Eternity; he was low and mean in his own Eyes: He thought, and spake of himself, as less than the least of all Saints, and would sometimes question, whether he might be so called.

For, such was the good Pleasure of God, whose ways are unsearchable, and who giveth no one an Account of his Matters, that this good Man should

should be exercised for many Years together, with great Weakness of Body, and sometimes with sore Pains, which had a natural Tendency to depress his Spirits, and dispose him to Melancholy: And as it is very common to find, when it is thus with serious Christians, they are wont to be solicitous about this grand Question, Is God my Friend or Enemy, and are inclined to Diffidence, if not sometimes also to a Despondency about their future State; thus it was at some Seasons with him, and in all probability, such melancholy Dispositions of Mind increased the Distempers of his Body. Add to this what the Apostle saith, *We are not ignorant of Satan's Devices.* I believe very few, or none, had more free and intimate Conversation with him than my self, about the Frame and State of his Soul; and I think my self obliged to say this concerning him, that I never met with any Person, that expressed more Sorrow for Sin, and Abhorrence of it, with self-abasing, and self-loathing, and self-condemning, than he did; at the same time most earnestly desiring, and I doubt not sincerely and diligently endeavouring after, a total Freedom from the Remainders of Corruption. Sin was his most heavy Burden, and what he was constantly bewailing and striving against. I have observed to him, that he was too much inclined to dwell in his Thoughts upon the awful Attributes of God; such as his terrible Majesty, and strict Justice, and perfect Holiness, &c. and could not, without great Difficulty, be persuaded to meditate upon the amiable Perfections of the Deity; such as his Clemency, and Goodness, and Mercy. He would indeed very frequently admire and adore the Patience, and Long-suffering of God towards Sinners, and towards himself in particular; and as his only

Hope was in, so he would sometimes even rejoice and be glad in the believing Thoughts of the Mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Propitiation for our Sins; and that he that believeth in him shall never be confounded, World without End.

It is no Wonder, if this his Distemper of Body and Mind, should sometimes hinder his Usefulness in Part; yet he was laborious and useful in the Instruction of Youth, which was necessary in order to his making some better Provision for his Family; and he neglected not his Work as a Minister of the Gospel, for he preached constantly twice every Lord's Day, 'till within a very little Time before his Death, when he was hardly able to walk as far as the Place of Worship, besides Christian and ministerial Visits to his Flock, as there was Occasion.

He was sometimes in Bondage, by Reason of the fear of Death; but God was very gracious to him, in that he apprehended not the immediate Approach of this last Enemy; for he went to Bed on Saturday in the Evening, as well, if not better, than he had been for some Time before; having been from Home that Day, to visit a near Relation, and Neighbour, and, after some little Disorder by a sick Fit in the Night, he lay so composed, that those about him apprehended him to be taking Rest in Sleep; till in a little Time they found he had fallen asleep in Jesus. It was the Morning of our Sabbath on Earth, that his Soul took its Flight, and entered into that Rest that remaineth for the People of God.

And

And now what remaineth, but that we comfort our selves, and one another, with the Words of my Text, *The Word of the Lord endureth for ever.* I remember, when St. Paul was a Prisoner at *Rome*, and from thence wrote to *Timothy*, concerning his Suffering even unto Bonds, he tells him, *The Word of God was not bound*²; so should we comfort our selves with this Thought, tho' the Ministers of the Gospel do, and must die one after another, for they are but *earthen Vessels*, that are soon broken in Pieces, and all Flesh is as *Gras*; yet the Word of the Lord endureth: That liveth and abideth for ever. If our Bibles were to be buried in the Grave with your Ministers, then we should mourn indeed; and who, or what could comfort us? But this enduring Word may still be our Song in the House of our Pilgrimage.

It will be a just Foundation of Joy and Thanksgiving, if any of you can, in this sorrowful Time, find the blessed Effects, before mentioned, of the Word, as pointed to, and insisted on by him, that is among you no longer. And are there none that can say of him, he was their *spiritual Father*, or at least, their profitable Instructor? Have none of his Warnings and Cautions, none of his Admonitions and Reproofs, none of his Counsels and comfortable Words, in the Course of so many Years ministering among you, made some deep and abiding Impressions upon you? Are there no Seals of his Ministry to be found in this Place? I hope there is good Fruit to be found, that shall turn to good Account: I hope there are many who can

² 2 Tim. ii. 9.

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look forward with Joy to that blessed Time, when the great Shepherd of the Sheep shall appear, and give a Crown of Glory to his faithful Under-Shepherds; and though you will never see the Face of your once beloved Pastor more in this World, yet you will then see him, and rejoice with him, and be found his Crown of rejoicing, his Glory and his Joy in the Presence of the Lord Jesus, at his Coming.

And to conclude, Let this be Matter of Comfort also, that God will continue a Succession of Ministers to the End of Time, and the Residue of the Spirit also with the Lord. It was one of the great Blessings our ascending Lord bestowed on the Church, to give *Pastors, and Teachers, for the Work of the Ministry*; how much soever they have been, and may still be despised. It is a Wonder indeed, considering how little temporal Encouragement any of us have, and how many Discouragements some do meet with, that any should engage in this Work, especially among the Protestant Dissenters; but God will have a Church, and Ministers in that Church, to the End of Time. As we should take Comfort herein, so it is our Duty to pray, that the Lord of the Harvest would send forth Labourers into his Harvest; and supplicate for large Effusions of the Gifts and Graces of the holy Spirit, upon those Ministers that yet remain, and upon such as are rising up, and for their good Success: Let all of us also, in our several Stations, give all due Encouragement, and Assistance, to younger Ministers, and the Candidates for the Ministry; and not lay strong Temptations in their way, to forsake all Thoughts of the Ministry, or at least amongst us; in which, although they may find little Peace in their own Minds,

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Minds, and less Comfort, it may be, than they expected, as to this World, yet our Fault will not be lessened, nor can we take Comfort in theirs. I hope God will direct you in the prudent and unanimous Choice of one that shall succeed, and fill up the Room of your late Reverend Pastor, now with God; and it is my Prayer for you, which Moses made for the *Israelites*, Numb. xxvii. 16, 17. *Let the Lord, the God of the Spirits of all Flesh, set a Man over the Congregation, which may go out before them, and which may go in before them; which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the Congregation of the Lord be not as Sheep which have no Shepherd.*



F I N I S.



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